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Community Publication

# JAPAN

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Pacific**



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# Okinawa Kenpo



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of karate fights  
for tradition as  
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goes  
global*

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## 'LIFE-CHANGING' JOURNEY Zama employee finds success as bodybuilder

STORY AND PHOTOS BY NORIKO KUDO,  
US ARMY GARRISON

CAMP ZAMA – Eight years ago, before Kaoru Hashiguchi knew anything about posing, flexing or “bulking,” he was just a fitness enthusiast who one day went to a well-known gym in Tokyo with the goal of taking his workout to the next level.

A trainer at the gym approached Hashiguchi and told him that, with the proper training, he had the potential to be a competitive bodybuilder.

“It was totally unexpected,” said Hashiguchi, 56, an accounting technician with the 78th Signal Battalion at Camp Zama, Japan, who has worked on the installation for nearly 30 years. “I didn’t know who he was, nor did I really comprehend what he was saying.”

Hashiguchi later learned the man was a former all-Japan champion in the sport.

“I didn’t believe him at all,” said Hashiguchi. “But at the same time, I thought that if he was serious, it was too good of an opportunity to pass up.”

Hashiguchi decided to accept the challenge and soon began a three-year journey of learning the ins and outs of bodybuilding. This of course included a lot of time training at the gym, but Hashiguchi also changed his diet completely—everything from what he ate, to how he ate.

Based on his experience, Hashiguchi says the ideal body is crafted 60 percent from proper nutrition and 40 percent from exercise.

“My family also changed their diet to lose



Kaoru Hashiguchi

**SEE BODYBUILDER ON PAGE 2**

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# BODYBUILDER: 'Never too late to change'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

weight and become healthier after seeing the dramatic change in my body and listening to my philosophy during my training process," Hashiguchi said.

Finally, in 2015, Hashiguchi entered the 23rd Tokyo Open Bodybuilding Championship. Despite having trained for three years, it was still his first competition, so Hashiguchi said he did not know what to expect—or even what to do—once he got onstage.

From the stage, Hashiguchi could see his trainer in his eye line for the duration of his performance. Using gestures, his trainer guided him through the entire posing and flexing process. The result, Hashiguchi said, "was more than [he] ever could have imagined."

"I ended up being named champion in the men's 65 kg and under [weight] division," Hashiguchi said.

Since winning at the Tokyo Open, Hashiguchi has continued to train and participate in other bodybuilding competitions. Though he has not won another title since then, Hashiguchi says he has made it to the finals many times.

Although he still works out regularly, Hashiguchi said he took a break this year from training specifically for bodybuilding. However, he has set a goal for next year to enter more competitions and become a champion again. It will be a challenge because bodybuilding has only become more popular and competitive since he began training, Hashiguchi said.



Kaoru Hashiguchi helps Yukio Kondo with a weightlifting exercise Sept. 3 at the Sagami-hara Gion Arena in Sagami-hara City.

Hashiguchi works out daily, typically during lunchtime, at Camp Zama's Yano Fitness Center. Located just a short drive from where he works, Yano is where "everything started" for Hashiguchi's fitness journey, he said.

Having regular access to Yano, which has no membership fees, unlike expensive private fitness centers outside the installation, is one of the best benefits of working for the U.S. Army as a Japanese civilian, Hashiguchi says.

Because of his physique and his obvious familiarity with form and technique, Hashiguchi says other patrons often approach him for advice.

"Soldiers, local national employees and civilian employees come up to me and ask me questions on how to train properly, what to eat, how to lose weight, and how to get ideal fitness results," Hashiguchi said. "I have

gotten to meet and interact with people of so many different ages and backgrounds."

Yukio Kondo, an administrative specialist with the 836th Transportation Battalion, trains for physique competitions and said Hashiguchi gives him advice and detailed information on how to train and eat effectively, in order to see positive results.

"Mr. Hashiguchi's advice is always specific and precise, no matter what I ask," said Kondo. "He speaks from experience. Having his support in the gym gives me the motivation to train more effectively."

Training with others and being able to share the knowledge and techniques he has accrued over the years truly brings him joy, Hashiguchi says. He is proud to work for an organization like the U.S. Army, which emphasizes the importance of maintaining physical and mental health, and which offers access to fitness centers like Yano.

Entering the world of bodybuilding has changed him both inside and out, Hashiguchi says.

"It has been a life-changing experience for me," Hashiguchi said. "It has been an amazing journey."

Well into his middle age, Hashiguchi says he has no plans to slow down his fitness regimen. In fact, he is planning to become a licensed personal trainer after his retirement.

"It is never too late to make a change and get healthier," said Hashiguchi. "Anybody can change their body, regardless of their age. And I can truly say that because I did it myself."



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Patient Mei Takehisa, 5, has her photo taken with Santa Wayne Baxter of 374 Civil Engineers and sidekick Suzu Yae of NPO Mannakano-ie.

# Volunteers bring Christmas cheer to children's hospital

STORY AND PHOTOS BY  
MIKE VAN HOECKE,  
STRIPE JAPAN

It was not the night before Christmas, but it was well before dawn, when a truckload of gifts and four vans-loads of helpers left the Yokota Base West Gate to celebrate a holiday ritual December 6th. For the seventh straight year, this convoy headed south to Kanagawa Children's Medical Center where many good boys and girls were struggling with life-threatening illnesses and birth defects. At the trip's end were children from infant to about age 17 who were receiving care for cancer, cardiovascular problems, and congenital illnesses. Since many patients were tethered by bandages, breathing tubes, or intravenous drips, this party was coming to them.

On this special day, volunteers from throughout the Kanto Plain would join the Yokota Sons of Hawaii Club to create a colorful fantasy to chase away the nightmare that illness often brings.

Astonished patients and parents marveled as tall Star War Imperial Storm troopers, clad in white armor, travelled down the corridors as casually as the medical staff. Four crimson Santas and accompanying Mrs. Santas

visited patients, delivered presents, and had their photos taken on busy cell phones. These seasonal celebrities were often accompanied by the same storm troopers, a large walking snowman, multicolored Kanto clowns with balloon presents, or a lovely walking Christmas tree.

Then there were the reindeer and elves, many of whom were taken from the ranks of young civil engineers at Yokota. They added splashes of green and brown to the moving party as well as helpful hands. In the lobby, an elf trio played island tunes that included a hula performance for the benefit of outpatients. Navy blue and Army green also arrived in two gleaming brass quintets to play holiday favorites such as Rudolf the Red-nose Reindeer and Jingle Bells. These members of the 7th Fleet Shonan Brass Quintet and the USARJ Band of the Pacific Brass Quintet integrated seamlessly to provide quality carols not only in the lobby, but in the cafeteria and in staff areas where workers were anchored to constant administrative tasks. Event organizer Fern Fields said having both branches play together was a first, and the show of fraternity was as impressive as ... well ... six-foot stormtroopers sauntering down the corridor.





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# Free time at Tokyo Station

## Save a buck and enjoy the area's free art, history lessons

STORY AND PHOTOS BY DAVE KRIGBAUM,  
WWW.WAYFARERDAVES.COM

**T**okyo station is the starting point for visits to many of Tokyo's great sights, but the historic station itself is also a destination to appreciate that doesn't cost a thing to see. And for those looking to see Tokyo on a budget, it's the perfect place to begin a morning of free sightseeing in one of the city's most culturally significant areas.



**Tokyo Station  
(Marunouchi Building)**

**I**love red brick buildings or “akarenga” from the late 19th and early 20th centuries and Tokyo Station's Marunouchi Building is my favorite. Grand in scale and detailed beautifully, upon completion in 1914 the building served as a status symbol elevating the city to the likes of London or Paris. Though designed to be practical and to facilitate the busy train commute, the architect Kingo Tatsuno, used the building as a canvas to create art both inside and out.

One of the things I love about this period's architecture is the detail work, not just a nice structure but the nuances in the grey granite accents, the columns and fancy Victorian roofing. Inside the north and south rotundas, Tatsuno added an extra touch in the ceilings which would discreetly carry over into another project on the other side of the country whether either of his employers was aware of it or not.

When taking in either of the rotunda ceilings from within, among the many artistic flourishes are eight animals, one in each corner. These represent eight zodiac signs, but that means Tokyo Station is four animals short. Catch the remaining four all the way down in Kyushu, where Tatsuno incorporated them in the ceiling of the Takeo Onsen gatehouse.

This is one of Tokyo Station's lighter stories but being a place where millions have trod with different intentions some are also darker. Two markers in particular inside the station are a reminder of the sometimes violent world of Japanese politics preceding World War II because the station is the site of two successful assassination attempts on prime ministers.

The first was the “Commoner Prime Minister” Hara Takashi, who was stabbed to death by a right-wing railroad employee on Nov. 4, 1921 inside the south



side tower, under Tatsuno's eight Zodiac animals. There is a very small six-sided star-shaped marker on the ground where he fell and a brass placard on the wall near the ticket terminals. Hara holds the record for three firsts: the first non-noble prime minister, the first Christian prime minister and the first assassinated prime minister since Japan became a constitutional monarchy.

Nine years later, Prime Minister Hamaguchi Osachi would be shot inside the station by a right-wing assailant on Nov. 14, 1930. Though he didn't die immediately, he succumbed to his wounds the following year. Sadly, these were just two of many politicians who were killed as Japan's first fleeting attempt at democracy (not counting the Ezo Republic) gave way to military-led fascism.

Inside the station, before exiting the ticket gates, you'll find the site where Hamaguchi was shot at the bottom of the steps approaching Shinkansen platforms 20-23. More visible than Hara's marker, Hamuchi's is a red granite tile on the floor with a smaller, star-shaped stud in-



side of it.

On the night of May 25, 1945, bombs dropped during the Tokyo Air Raid burned off the station's upper floor and original roof. As a cost-saving measure, the repairs did not initially include rebuilding the third floor, but in 2012, the station was restored to its full three-story height including a recreation of the original roof. If you look at the third floor you'll notice the bricks are different than those under it.

Another nice touch is that the clutter that had accumulated between the station and the Imperial Palace has been swept away, recreating the grand open space connecting the two historic sites.

To learn more about the station, walk around the outside and look for little placards with bits of information on its construction and history.



**Famous sights outside Imperial Palace Gardens: Nijubashi and Kusunoki Masashige Statue**

**O**utside the Imperial Palace walls with its beautiful, but pay-to-enter, garden is a park with two Tokyo landmarks that can be viewed for free.

Nijubashi, are a pair of bridges leading to the Imperial Palace's main gate. (The one for official use, not garden visitors.)

The stately stone double-arched foreground bridge has graced countless travel posters, brochures and post cards for over



a century. The second steel bridge behind it almost blends into the background, but together they create a beautiful view that was made to be photographed.

Normally these bridges leading to the imperial palace are off-limits, but it is opened to the public twice a year. Once for New Year on Jan. 2, so the public may greet the emperor, and again on the reigning emperor's birthday.

Across the road in another part of the garden, look out for the equestrian statue of Kusunoki Masashige. Kusunoki was a 14th century warlord who fought for Emperor Go-Daigo. His statue was erected during the Meiji era (1868-1912), when the new government was working to unite people in loyalty to the emperor and not to the defunct shogunate or abolished feudal lords. Later Kusunoki's example would again be used to inspire the kamikaze of World War II.

History aside, the statue stands on its own merits as art with its dramatic pose, fine detail in the clothing and armor, the lively horse and Kusunoki's stern visage, all rendered in sharply contrasting black and verdigris green.



**MacArthur's Headquarters**

If returning from the garden to the station, or past it for my next stop, I recommend taking a slight detour to the opposite side of the outer moat from Kusunoki's statue to see another place from which Japan was once led. Today it is the DN21 Tower or Daichi Seimei (Life Insurance) Building, but between 1945 to 1952 it was Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) General Headquarters, from which Gen. Douglas MacArthur oversaw the occupation of Japan. The general's office is preserved but only occasionally opened to the public.

**Bank of Japan & Currency Museum**

Another of architect Tatsuno's great works is the Bank of Japan, a contrast to Tokyo Station. Built in 1896, this bank building is the epitome of the grey urban fortress with its high columns and intimidating proportions.

Free tours of the bank's interior are held Tuesday-Friday 12:45 to 13:15 p.m. and do not require a reservation. I, unfortunately, visited on a





Bank of Japan

➔ Saturday so could not take the tour, but did get to visit the currency museum which is across the street.

As the name says, it's all about the history of money in Japan from the earliest bartered goods and borrowed Chinese currency to today's yen. It has a lot of rare and ancient money on display from all eras which one doesn't usually get to see. I was given a handout to borrow which translated all of the displays well and made it easy to follow.

The bank and museum are adjacent to the Mitsukoshimae Station.

### Mitsubishi's Akarenga (Ichigokan and Café 1894)

The area around Tokyo Station is partially owned by Mitsubishi, which has a few red brick and other old buildings which fit aesthetically with the old station otherwise surrounded by glass and steel sky scrapers.

One of these Mitsubishi akarenga is the Ichigokan (No. 1), a rather-convincing reproduction of the Marunouchi district's original Western-style office building

built in 1894. I'd been fooled into thinking it was original as most modern recreations of old buildings tend to be lazy with the small details but they went all out to make you believe this has been here since Victoria and Meiji were monarchs.

Though it has an art gallery you can pay to enter, it has a small free gallery with a presentation on the founding of Mitsubishi and an art room. Around the corner is the one thing I had to pay for during my day out to the Tokyo Station area, and that's lunch. Café 1894 is what happens when you painstakingly recreate a Victorian bank and then turn that recreation into a dining facility. Eating hayashi rice and mixed sandwich lunch plates among its polished wood columns created an ambience that felt fitting after seeing so many other remainders from that era when Japan had begun mastering Western architecture and design, making it their own.

This was a quick morning trip, but there are more small memorials, historic places and even Godzilla to find if you don't mind the walk. Happy hunting!

For this trip I began at Tokyo Station



Café 1894

### •ADDRESSES•

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1-chome-9-1 Marunouchi, Chiyoda City, Tokyo 100-0005

<http://www.tokystationcity.com/en/>

#### Nijubashi

35.679669, 139.755526

Kusunoki Masashige Statue

35.677919, 139.758489

#### Daichi Seimei

1-chome-13-1 Yurakucho, Chiyoda City, Tokyo 100-0005

#### Bank of Japan

2-chome-1-1 Nihonbashihongokuchō, Chuo City, Tokyo 103-0021

<https://www.boj.or.jp/en/about/services/kengaku.htm/#pp02>

#### Currency Museum

1-3-1 Nihonbashi Hongokuchō, Chuo City, Tokyo 103-0021

[http://www.imes.boj.or.jp/cm/english/ichigokan & Café 1894](http://www.imes.boj.or.jp/cm/english/ichigokan&Cafe1894)

2-chome-6-2 Marunouchi, Chiyoda City, Tokyo 100-0005

<https://mimt.jp/english/cafe1894/>

before 9 a.m. then headed to the Imperial Palace gardens before heading back up past the station for the Bank of Japan and Currency Museum when it opened at 9:30

a.m. We had lunch at Café 1894 after. I had visited Dai-ichi Seimei on a different trip. Café 1894 meals hovered around 1500 yen which, given the location, isn't bad.

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Heisei Gamera 1999

# DNA of Tokusatsu Exhibition a must for giant monster fans

STORY AND PHOTOS BY  
EDWARD L. HOLLAND,  
STRIPES JAPAN

Giant monster enthusiasts are in for a terrapin treat with Gamera's first full career spanning show during the DNA of Tokusatsu "The Wonder of Heisei-period Gamera and Talented Daiei Film's Special Effects" Exhibition in Kamata, Tokyo. Kadokawa Daiei Studio Company Ltd., known for their Zatoichi series of movies first introduced the tortoise film star to Japanese theaters in Gamera The Giant Monster (1965) directed by Noriaki Yuasa (1933-2004). The kaiju hero went toe to toe with Toho Studios' Godzilla in the 60s and descended into lighter fare in the cathode wave of television heroes like

Ultraman (1966). Gamera challenged Godzilla's status on UHF TV sets for decades during Saturday afternoon matinees across America's heartland.

The flying turtle, an avid protector of children, and slight destroyer by default went into hibernation until his resurrection in Gamera: Guardian of the Universe (1995) which won titanic appeal from monster audiences. The next generation of artists evolved their state-of-the-art craft in the trilogy series fleshed out by director Shusuke Kaneko and special effects director, Shinji Higuchi. The film, with its slight horror angle became the new standard in kaiju cinema and some consider it the second coming of Japanese special effects filmmaking. Godzilla

suit actor, Kenpachiro Satsuma went as far as calling the first film a masterpiece.

This fifth outing by the curators of the DNA of Tokusatsu is the first chronicle of Gamera and perennial favorites like the Daimajin trilogy, with VIP access to over 200 historical, production pieces. The design, layout and flow of the expo focuses on the 12 Gamera films and resembles a fine art museum with artifacts in amazing shape, the bulk of which are over two decades old.

Mechanized props, full-scale alien monsters, puppets, original illustrations that adorned book covers, record albums, and Japanese kaiju bibles from yesteryear are all on display for everyone to enjoy. "The

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→ Gamera and Daimajin exhibit is the first of very few opportunities to see such props from the Gamera of the 90s and is presented in an easy to understand method only once this year and for a portion of 2020,” said Ultraman Ginga director, Yoshikazu Ishii.

The exhibition culminates with a detailed miniature Daiei Films studio, photo spots, and large scale, exclusive diorama featuring Gamera chasing the formidable Gyaos through the clouds, supervised by art director, Toshio Miike, who has worked on Gamera, Godzilla, and Ultraman motion pictures. According to Miike, “The display was created in only two days by 20 special effects students, just for the exhibition.”

It is a once in a lifetime experience for those weaned on giant monster culture, as the green-blooded Gamera celebrates his 54th anniversary this year. “The amount of history and artistry on display was a massive sentimental shot in the arm, and really set



Gamera vs. Daimajin studio © KADOKAWA

my artistic brain on fire,” said comic book artist, Matt Frank.

Frank mentioned, “The Gamera series has some of the most amazing props and production design.” For collectors,

there are limited soft vinyl toys, clothes, even Gamera-themed candy available to purchase in the gift shop. The store also stocks fine art prints by illustrator, Yuji Kaida and t-shirts designed by artist, Shinji Nishikawa, and director Higuchi.

Legendary sculptor and suit maker, Keizo Murase who worked on the first generation of Gamera, Godzilla, Daimajin and more commented, “It was nostalgic to see the material of the great Daimajin there. The Heisei Gamera was more evolved than what we made during the Showa era, and it’s regrettable that the evolution of that costume ended after the fine trilogy of films.”

With the continual growth of popularity in giant monster movies, there is no satisfying the insatiable appetite for Gamera and his adversaries during this

limited peek back into treasured films from the distant and recent past. Take advantage of the display that cements Gamera’s lasting cinematic impact at the DNA of Tokusatsu Exhibition located at the Nihon Kogakuin College Konotori Gallery in Kamata, Tokyo, which runs until Jan. 26, 2020.

Edward L. Holland, a photojournalist working in Japan and a longtime contributor to Stars and Stripes, has written for Famous Monsters of Filmland, G-Fan, and is a recipient of a community service award from the Cabinet Office of the Government of Japan.

## WHAT TO KNOW

See amazing artifacts from Daiei Film’s monster movies which revolutionized Japanese special effects and continue to thrill kaiju fans across the world at the DNA of Tokusatsu “Heisei-period Gamera and Talented Daiei Film’s Special Effects” Exhibition in Kamata, Tokyo which runs until Sunday Jan. 26.

■ **INFO IN ENGLISH HERE:** [https://unique-ota.city.ota.tokyo.jp/en/event/tokusatsu\\_dna/](https://unique-ota.city.ota.tokyo.jp/en/event/tokusatsu_dna/)

■ **INFO IN JAPANESE HERE:** <http://www.tokusatsu-dna.com/>

■ **ADMISSION TICKETS:** range from 1,100 to 1,800 yen and can be purchased at Lawson, Ticket Pia, Seven Ticket, or at the venue.

■ **DATES:** Dec. 13, 2019 – Jan. 26, 2020. Exhibit closed Tues. Dec. 31, Wed. Jan. 1, and Sat. Jan. 11, 2020.

■ **TALK SHOW DATES:** Jan. 10 and Jan. 13, 2020. Tickets: 3,000 yen, which include entrance to exhibition.

■ **HOURS:** open Monday - Sunday 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. (entrance closes at

6:30 p.m.)

■ **LOCATION:** Konotori Gallery Nihon Kogakuin College

■ **ADDRESS:** 5-23-22 Nishikamata Ota City, Tokyo 144-0051

■ **ACCESS:** Kamata, Tokyo is located between Shinagawa and Kawasaki and easily accessible via the Keikyu Kamata and JR Kamata train lines.



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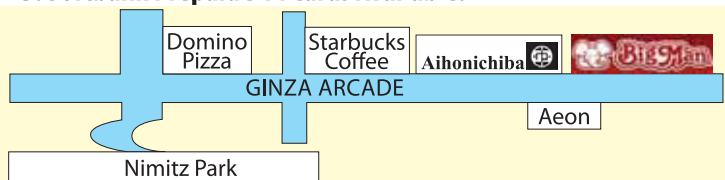
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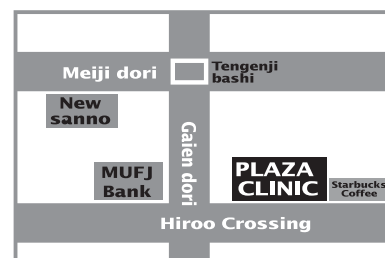
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# BIRTHPLACE Karate FOR TRADITIONAL OLYMPIC SPORT

STORY AND PHOTOS BY EMILY ISAACMAN,  
STRIPES JAPAN

SHURI — Kina's karate dojo is easy to miss, hidden in a small wooden house set back from a narrow side street. The darkened front yard looks abandoned, save for makeshift barbells — two cement blocks connected by a steel pole — sunk in calf-high grass.

The dojo itself isn't much. It's more a shack than a studio, with a gaping hole left in a wall by a typhoon and cracks in the plaster. A 2012 calendar hanging in the back instructs students: "It's better to do something one time than be told to do it 100 times."

One night last March, the hardwood floor creaked as teenagers in white karate uniforms with "Okinawa Kenpo" patches chased their sensei across the room and punched blue striking pads strapped to his forearms.

"Hai! Oh, good punch!" teacher Josh Simmers yelled, alternating between Japanese and English. "C'mon, more, more!"

The six students then split into pairs to

drill a series of moves known as "kata." The sequence of kicks and punches finished with half the students thrown to the hardwood floor and their partners' fists inches from their faces.

The "Okinawa Kenpo Karate-Do Kyo-kai Kina Dojo" was founded more than 30 years ago in Shuri, an Okinawan castle town considered one of three places on this southern Japanese island where karate developed over the centuries.

While places like Kina's dojo are considered the home of karate, the martial art has spread far from its roots.

In the decades since World War II, karate has gone international, with some 100 million practitioners around the world. Next summer, the sport will reach the pinnacle of global acceptance when it appears for the first time at the Tokyo Olympics.

But traditionalists say the transformation of karate into an international competitive sport threatens to undermine its centuries-old focus on spirituality and character. As athletes around the world train for Olympic medals, Okinawan karate activists and the local government are mounting a campaign to preserve their time-honored karate style.

Experts agree there are little or no technical differences between international sport karate and Okinawan karate. But Okinawans argue the intention and spirit of traditional karate is different from the international style.

International sport karate focuses on scoring points and winning competitions. Traditional karate emphasizes a lifelong commitment to understanding the art per intentions of the founding masters. Traditionalists consider titles won in competitions irrelevant and temporary.

The dojo run by Toshimitsu Kina, 77, is one of nearly 400 neighborhood dojos in Okinawa that claim to teach karate in its foundational form.

Kina has dedicated himself to martial arts for more than 60 years. He holds a third-degree black belt in judo and a ninth-degree black belt in karate, the second to highest level.

But even Kina's dojo is adjusting to changing times: Kina transferred his weekly class to Simmers, an American Army veteran, this year. Kina now monitors training sessions like the one that night in March from a seat in the corner, arms folded and bushy white eyebrows furrowed.

It was not an easy transition. Simmers, 43, trained in the Okinawa Kenpo style in the U.S. under Kina's top protegee. When Simmers moved to Okinawa in 2015, he waited almost three years before securing an invitation to Kina's dojo.

"You had to prove yourself," Simmers said. "Especially as an American."

Accepting a foreigner, though, doesn't

mean buying into the way karate is practiced outside Okinawa — even in other parts of Japan.

The international sport karate community has spent decades pushing for a spot in the Olympics. When Kina was asked about the 2020 games, he just shrugged.

"It's completely different from what we do," Kina said.

## 'Martial art of peace'

Little documentation can show exactly how or when karate began, but historians trace its foundations to Okinawa when it was the center of the Ryukyu Kingdom starting in the late 14th and early 15th centuries.

The most commonly understood account claims karate began as "te," an open-handed fighting technique inspired by Chinese martial arts. Japan annexed Okinawa in 1879, and karate became popular on the mainland in the 1920s.

The so-called "martial art of peace" suffered greatly in World War II with the Battle of Okinawa in 1945, which killed some 200,000 people and reduced the island to rubble.

Kunio Uehara, chief of the Okinawa Karate Information Center, said the spirit of karate helped survivors cultivate patience and hope as they recovered from the war. He likened the effects of karate in Okinawa to attending church in the West.

"This culture helps people inside," he said. "Mentally, not physically."

The U.S. military occupied Okinawa from 1945 until it was turned over to Japan in 1972. American soldiers stationed here jump-started karate's internationalization as they brought the practice home with them.

"The Karate Kid" movies appeared in the 1980s, and dojos started to become common across the U.S. But Uehara said training in Okinawa for one or two years, as American troops did, was not enough to learn an art that takes a lifetime to master.



American army-veteran Josh Simmers teaches weekly classes on Wednesday nights at Kina's dojo in Shuri, Okinawa.



Toshimitsu Kina, 77, demonstrates how to use a traditional karate weapon called sai. Kina has trained in martial arts for more than 60 years.



# CE OF FIGHTS TION AS GOES GLOBAL

Now Okinawans are working to assert ownership of karate.

The local government moved to guide the development of karate in 2017 with the establishment of the Karate Kaikan, a sprawling white complex with training halls, a research room and a historical exhibit showing how karate evolved into a global phenomenon.

“Our goal is to make sure karate is not changed,” Uehara said.

Karate is also becoming part of Okinawa’s tourism industry.

Uehara said the best way to teach foreigners “correct” karate is to invite them to Okinawa to experience first-hand the traditional form. He helps arrange classes for visitors at the Kaikan or approved dojos, and a growing number of “karate tours” take foreigners to karate monuments, shrines and dojos.

Uehara visited America in 1980 on a study abroad trip. He said the Americans’ training looked easy, and their motions weren’t sharp. He noticed they tied their karate belts on the side of their hips, while Okinawans always form the knot in the center for the “fighting spirit.”

He said he was astonished.

“U.S. karate is another karate to me,” Uehara said.

## Commercialization

Less than three miles from Kina’s dojo, British-born James Pankiewicz teaches traditional karate to people from all over the world in an atmosphere far from Kina’s worn-down shack in Shuri.

A large white sign runs atop the length of the storefront, about a 10-minute walk from Kokusai Dori, Naha’s main tourist drag packed with vacationing Chinese. Compared to dojos like Kina’s, the Asato Dojo is easy to find.

“My dojo is a bit of an exception,” Pankiewicz said.

The Asato Dojo has red mat floors often seen in sport karate studios. A section in the back of the room presents shirts and other merchandise for sale.

As recent as five to 10 years ago,

foreigners needed contacts in Okinawa to visit and train at dojos, Pankiewicz said. He opened his dojo in 2018 as part of a growing push to make Okinawan karate more accessible. One class costs about \$19.

On a Tuesday night in March, Pankiewicz led consecutive sessions of supplementary exercises and karate technique to visitors from Brazil, China and the U.S. They spoke different languages and came from separate schools of training, yet they all wanted to practice where karate began.

“Okinawa, for karate, is a mecca,” Pankiewicz said.

The first half of the night involved a training circuit to strengthen muscles needed in karate. They punched with dumbbells in their hands to practice maintaining alignment while fatigued and lunged across the floor holding heavy “gripping jars” in their hands to strengthen their core.

Pankiewicz timed the exercises with an app on his smartphone.

After practicing “kata” and wiping the floor with paper towels — cleaning the dojo is a customary practice — Pankiewicz invited his students across the street to his other business: the Dojo Bar.

Commercialization is on full display here at Okinawa’s first karate-themed, international-style sports bar.

“This place is like a karate geek’s paradise,” James Newman, a tourist from Washington state, said as he walked in.

Sharpie-signed signatures of names, countries and dates cover the walls. Patrons can pick from western or Okinawan foods including cheesy potato wedges, gyoza, Caesar salad and somen noodles.

Photographs of famous karate masters crowd the space above the fully stocked bar, and T-shirts for sale hang in the back. A Hawaiian-style shirt with pictures of the Dojo Bar and karate practitioners had a \$110 price tag advertising “karate island wear born from the cradle of karate,” referring to Okinawa.

Around 10 p.m., Newman mingled at the bar with a Brazilian man and Simmers, the teacher at Kina’s Dojo who also trains with Pankiewicz. They started a heated discussion over the best type of karate uniforms, known as gi, based on observations from class that night.

Simmers and Newman made plans to go to Shureido, a karate equipment shop nearby, to pick out a new uniform the next day.

Simmers said the bar serves as a launching pad to help tourists connect and find places to train.

“If you don’t have a Dojo home, you come to the Dojo bar,” he said.

## ‘It’s our duty’

In April 2016, four months before the International Olympic Committee approved karate for the Tokyo Games, Okinawa’s governor created the Karate Promotion Division to preserve and pass down “Okinawa Traditional Karate.”

“It’s our duty,” said Tetsuo Yamakawa, the karate division’s director.

One problem the Okinawa karate community faces is that the island is not well-known as the birthplace of this martial art — not even within Japan. A 2017 survey by the Karate Promotion Division found 96 percent of respondents in Okinawa knew karate originated on the island. But that number dropped to less than 35 percent in the rest of the country.

The numbers illustrate a divide between Okinawa and Japan.

Okinawa has been part of Japan for nearly half a century, but people refer to karate as either Okinawan or Japanese. Both categorize karate as culture, rather than a sport, but they are separate organizations. Japan has a national karate organization that does not include Okinawan karate.

Yamakawa intends to raise the profile of Okinawa karate’s more than 80 “kata” by registering them on the United

SEE KARATE ON PAGE 10



A special dojo called Shurei Hall is located near the main Kaikan building.



# KARATE: Each 'kata' carries meaning

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization list of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Kata are the codified sequences of movements at the core of the artform's practice.

Each kata, Yamakawa said, carries meaning, and changing even slightly one of those movements changes that meaning.

This goal is one of many included in the office's 20-year "vision" for preserving and protecting traditional Okinawan karate. The document describes the mission of traditional karate to carefully develop karate as it was created by Okinawa's predecessors.

It outlines ways to promote karate tourism, organize international events and improve communication among the many styles in the Okinawa karate community.

No goals reference the Olympics.

Earlier this year, the IOC announced karate would likely not appear in the 2024 Summer Games in Paris. Several national karate associations condemned the decision. The World Karate Federation launched a social media campaign defending the sport before the committee finalizes the decision in December.

Yamakawa did not see this as a big deal. To him, an Olympic medal is less valuable than passing down karate in its true form. He said he wants the world to experience the discipline, confidence and kindness traditional karate can impart.

"We want to make this world happy through this karate training," he said.

In 2018, the government organized "The 1st Okinawa Karate International Tournament" to judge competitors on how well they adhered to traditional forms. The event in the Kaikan's main hall drew more than 1,000 people from about 40 countries.

But not everyone in Okinawa agrees with using global outreach to preserve a treasured tradition.

In March, the Okinawa Karate Information Center released the first public list of Okinawa dojos. Of the 386 dojos recorded in a 2016 survey by the center,



Kunio Uehara, director of the Okinawa Karate Information Center, stands in front of tournament posters in his office at the Karate Kaikan. Uehara connects tourists with Okinawan dojos to help spread traditional Okinawan karate.

only 191 agreed to be included.

Kina's dojo is not on the list.

Though an American now teaches class, speaking English while everyone else speaks only Japanese, Kina's dojo remains like a family.

Kina grows banana trees in his dojo's backyard and shares the fruits with his class when they're ripe. When his home was destroyed in a 2016 fire, Simmers and another American organized a fundraiser.

Simmers said this show of support, in addition to running into Kina at various karate seminars and tournaments, helped him gain Kina's approval.

"I think that opened up his eyes a little bit, opened up his heart a little bit," Simmers said.

Kina promoted Simmers within months to a fourth degree black belt. At Kina's dojo, this level denotes a licensed teacher who is allowed to accept fees for classes.

After class that night in March, the group bowed to each other before cleaning up.

They bowed their heads to the floor.

Each student told Kina five good things they did in the past week.

"I did the laundry," one boy said.

"I threw out the garbage," another shared.

Kina gave his students Snickers and crackers before they scrambled home in the darkness.

Someday Kina will select a disciple to follow his path as president of the Okinawa Kenpo organization. He hasn't made an official announcement since he's still healthy and able to lead, but there's speculation he will choose his brother or the senior student who trained Simmers.

Sometimes, after the teenagers go home, adults show up — black belts only — and Kina stays an extra hour to teach them himself. In traditional karate the close bond between master and student is valued more than a room full of participants.

No adults came that night, though.

The dojo was now quiet. The sliding doors opened to the front garden. Bricks that Kina used to break with his bare hands lay outside in the overgrown grass.

Alone with his thoughts, Kina wandered to a post dividing the open-door frames and began to punch.

His fist thumped on the wood over and over again.

*Emily Isaacman is in her third year at Indiana University, where she is studying journalism and political science. Emily traveled to Okinawa over spring break for a reporting course. She works for IU's student newspaper, the Indiana Daily Student.*

Students slid across the wood on their bellies, rolled over and wiggled back. They contorted into backbends for the final pass, inching across the floor upside down.

Huffing and puffing, they sat around a green punching bag strapped to a pole in the center of the room and waited for Kina to initiate the last routine of the night.

Kina stood from his chair. The students and Simmers knelt before him. A boy led a call-and-response and they all sat quiet for a moment, eyes closed.



The Dojo Bar is located at a street corner in Asato, Okinawa.



Walls inside of the Dojo Bar in Asato, Okinawa, are covered with signatures of visitors from all over the world. James Pankiewicz opened the international karate-themed sports bar in 2011.



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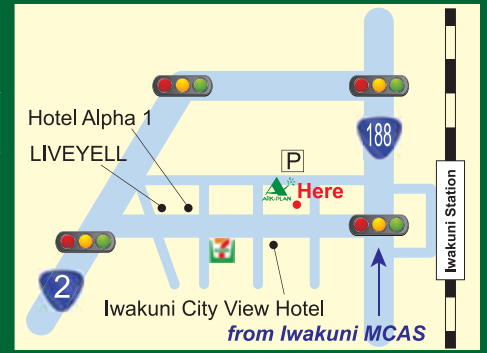
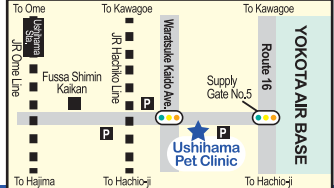
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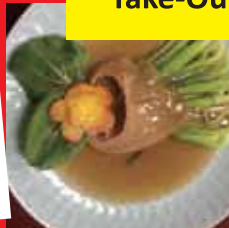
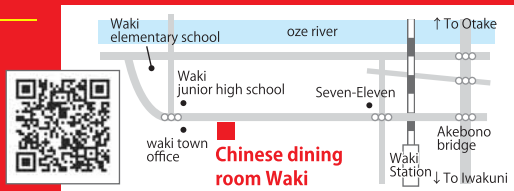
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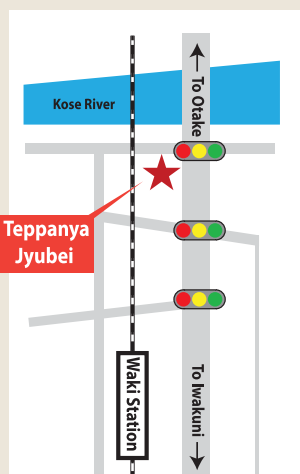
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# A taste of Ryukyu in Tokyo

## Where to go for tasty Okinawan fare



BY FRANCISCO CARDOSO,  
BYFOOD

**T**ired of eating ramen, sushi, and bento boxes every night? Then worry not, because you are able to get Okinawan food in Tokyo to spice up your meal rotation.

If you're on a budget and aren't able to travel to the sunny and tropical beaches of Okinawa, make sure to visit these restaurants to satiate your appetite for the southern delicacies of Okinawa.

Okinawa is the southernmost prefecture of Japan, with a cuisine that has been influenced by Mainland China, Taiwan, and Japan to create cultural and culinary delicacies that are unique to the island. Okinawan food is also known as Ryukyuan cuisine after Okinawa's Ryukyu Kingdom was unified in Okinawa in 1429. Dishes filled with vegetables, fruits, and pork abound in Okinawan cuisine.

It's also known as one of the healthiest cuisines in the world, responsible for the long-living centenarians of Okinawa.

Strapped for cash and can't visit Okinawa? Then check out these Okinawan restaurants in Tokyo, they're sure to hit the spot!

### 1. Okinawa Paradise

Okinawa Paradise in Shinjuku is known for its fun and friendly atmosphere. Located in the red-light district of Kabukicho, this izakaya features Okinawan dishes such as Rafute Pork, Umi Budou (Ocean Grapes), and Okinawan Tofu. Paired with their nomihoudai (all-you-can-drink) option, the combination of Okinawan food and beer will ensure a good time. The owner, Shingo Tamaki, is known to play the sanshin (a traditional three-stringed banjo from Okinawa) every night and lead sing-alongs in the bar.



Source: Okinawa Paradise



Source: Akasaka Tantei

### 2. Akasaka Tantei

Costing a bit more than your average Tokyo eatery, Akasaka Tantei takes a different approach to Okinawan food than the rest of the Okinawan restaurants on this list. Featured on the Michelin Guide for 7 years in a row, Akasaka Tantei is home to unique dishes that blend traditional Japanese dishes and

Okinawan cuisine, making for delicacies that are sure to please. Using only produce straight from Okinawa, and with options for dining in a private room, this Michelin-starred Okinawan restaurant in Tokyo is a great option for someone who craves island flavors in an upscale but relaxed environment.

### 3. Miyarabi

If you're looking for Okinawan restaurant in Tokyo that fits your budget, then check out Miyarabi in Ikebukuro. Just a 4-minute walk away from Ikebukuro Station, this Okinawan restaurant has specializes in Ryukyuan cuisine with tofu dishes such as sukugarasu tofu (salted fish served atop fresh tofu) and tofuyo (a fermented Okinawan food). If you happen to be there on a Monday, Thursday, or Friday, then you will see a traditional Okinawan dance performances.

### 4. Taketomijima

Taketomijima is named after one of the most beautiful of Okinawa's islands. It would be easy to overlook this hole-in-the-wall restaurant as you explore the streets of Ginza. However, if you happen to find this hidden gem, then make sure to order their sashimi, made from fish imported from Okinawa. Don't forget to pair that sashimi with Okinawa's awamori, an alcoholic beverage that is unique to the shores of Okinawa made from rice. The traditional Okinawan food combined with the scenes of Okinawa being projected onto the walls will make you feel as if you have been transported there.

If you're ever in the mood for Okinawan food in Tokyo, try some delicacies of the southernmost island of Japan at one of these Okinawan restaurants in Tokyo. Eat like an Okinawan, and maybe you'll find yourself living to 100 years as well!



Source: MK photography

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# Meiji Chocolate Factory

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STORY AND PHOTOS BY NORIKO DUCK,  
JAPAN TRAVEL

**F**ebruary is one of the coldest months of the year in Japan, but also the best month to enjoy chocolate.

It is no coincidence that Valentine's Day is in February. Traditionally Japanese women give a treat to men for love, friendship or respect. Now most confectioners are in full force to sell their products specially made for the event. You can find lots of good chocolates and chocolate flavored sweets at this time. However, many of them aren't cheap. Women spend more money on buying cocoa sweets than any other time of the year because it is to show their good feeling for men they know. Some of them even buy highly priced

truffles made by one of the top chocolatiers in the world if the sweets are for guys they care about. It is okay to buy such outrageously priced

## Meiji Milk Chocolate

A chocolate that represents the company. You can enjoy the mellowness of cacao and the smell and taste of milk by eating it. 26 calories and 38 mg cacao polyphenols per block.

## Meiji Black Chocolate

A bitter chocolate that has its own style. It has a distinct aroma of cacao and a sharp bitterness of fine-quality. 26 calories and 65 mg cacao polyphenols per block. Very rich in the polyphenols, so especially beneficial to your health.

## Meiji Hi Milk Chocolate

A chocolate that has a mild, rich milkiness. Made in a style that it has a natural aroma and taste of milk by using good-quality ingredients. 26 calories and 24 mg polyphenols per block.

## Meiji Strawberry Chocolate

The distinct aroma, sweetness and sourness of the strawberry filling are in harmony with the mild taste of the milk chocolate coating. 28 calories per block. All this chocolate will invariably send you into a spin, maybe even to you dreaming about chocolate in your sleep, like some Japanese version of Willy Wonka's chocolate factory. Well, Meiji actually has a chocolate factory in Osaka, one that is open for the public for tours, twice daily. Bookings can be made on their website. While the tour is in Japanese, there may be a bilingual person in your group that may be able to translate.

Even the bitter one has mildness to its flavor.

There are also available in special packages

for the day of love. A design of many hearts and snow crystals is on the plastic cover sheet of the cases, and also on the wrapping papers.

The milky one has a long history. Firstly produced in 1926, it's been loved for the mild taste that hasn't changed by the Japanese. These chocolates are never out of style, and the label has kept its connection with this century old brand.

## GETTING THERE

The chocolate factory is conveniently located between Osaka and Kyoto on the JR Kyoto line, in Takatsuki. You can't miss it, as the world's biggest chocolate hued bar is located right next to the train tracks.

ADDRESS: 1-10 Asahi-cho, Takatsuki, Osaka  
TEL: 072-685-5011

URL: meiji.com

treats once in a while, but cheaper is better, isn't it?

As a Japanese who's been so into choosing and eating reasonably priced good sweets, I know that really great chocolates can

be bought at supermarkets and 7-Eleven stores. They're Meiji Chocolates, which are given the title of pure chocolates as they are created using strictly selected ingredients.

While you can buy a bar or two, I recommend you buy boxes of them. These boxes feature four flavors: milk, bitter, hi milk and strawberry – all for 370 yen. They all have a milky, rich taste.

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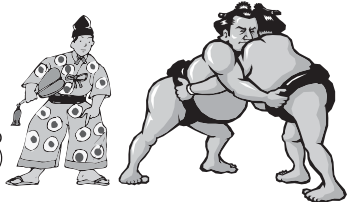
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### TOKYO SUMO WRESTLING TOUR

(Jan.17 - Jan.26 Departure)

Iwakuni departure

- \*Price includes...
- Round trip airfare
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(Feb.14 departure - Feb.17 return)  
Hiroshima departure



\$1,084

- \*Tour point...
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  - 5.5 star hotel stay
  - Full day sightseeing (Great Wall and Forbidden City) included
  - China visa application fee included \*Minimum 6 guests

### HOKKAIDO SKI/SNOWBOARD 4 DAYS

(Feb.13~17 departure) Hiroshima departure

Niseko Ski Resort  
(The Green Leaf Niseko stay)

\$839~\$900

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(Rusutsu Resort Hotel stay)

\$921~\$973

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# Speakin' Japanese

## Winter travel

As you travel this winter season, here are some useful Japanese phrases to help you along the way.

**"Samui desu, ne?"** = It is cold, isn't it?

**"Atataakai desu, ne?"** = It is warm, isn't it?

**"Atsui desu, ne?"** = It is hot, isn't it?

These expressions are often used with **"Ohayo Gozaimasu"** (good morning), **"Konnichiwa"** (good afternoon) or **"Konbanwa"** (good evening). **"Desu, ne?"** = it is, isn't it?

**"Yuki ga furisou desu."** = It looks like it is going to snow.

**"... sou desu"** = looks like going to be ...

These phrases are also used in daily conversations:

**"Ame ga furisou desu."** = It looks like it is going to rain.

**"Hare sou desu."** = It looks like going to be fine.

**"Yoi otenki desu."** = It is a beautiful day.

**"Atama ga itai desu."** = I have a headache.

**"... ga itai desu"** = "I have an ache/pain in ..."

When you have to see a doctor, you can use some of the following phrases:

**"Nodo ga itai desu."** = My throat hurts.

**"Onaka ga itai desu."** = I have a stomachache.

**"Netsu ga arimasu."** = I have a fever.

**"Seki ga demasu."** = I have a cough.

**"Kaze wo hikimashita."** = I caught a cold.

Tokyo eki **wa doko desuka?**

(Where is Tokyo Station?)

**"... wa doko desuka?"** = Where is ...

• Byouin **wa dokodesuka?** (Where is a hospital?)

• Koban **wa dokodesuka?** (Where is a police station?)

• Toire **wa dokodesuka?** (Where is a bathroom?)

**Eki made donokurai kakarimasuka?**

(How long does it take to the station?)

**"made donokurai kakarimasuka?"** = How long does it take to ...

• Kyanpu Foster **made donokurai kakarimasuka?** (How long does it take to Foster military base?)

• Kuuko **made donokurai kakarimasuka?** (How long does it take to an airport?)

**Mayoimashita.**

(I am lost.)

• Michi ga wakarimasen. (I don't know the way.)

• Basho ga wakarimasen. (I don't know where it is.)

—Takahiro Takiguchi, Stripes Japan

Pronunciation key: "A" is short (like "ah"); "E" is short (like "get"); "I" is short (like "it"); "O" is long (like "old"); "U" is long (like "tube"); and "AI" is a long "I" (like "hike"). Most words are pronounced with equal emphasis on each syllable, but "OU" is a long "O" with emphasis on that syllable.

## COMICS CORNER



PRESS ON!

by Randy Denman

Do you have an idea  
for comics? Email it to  
[Japan@stripes.com](mailto:Japan@stripes.com)



# Stripes Sports Trivia

The stories and highlights of Bo Jackson are hard to top. Baseball, football, track – he did it all. And did it all at a high level. The once-in-a-generation athlete seemed super-human at times. Unfortunately, though, Bo was human, and injuries cut his NFL career short. He played in only 38 games to be exact. He played 45 at what university?

Answer

Auburn University

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## DID YOU KNOW?

Many Japanese foods are considered superfoods. Fermented foods include natto, miso, shoyu (Japanese soy-sauce) and amazake; teas - matcha, green tea, bancha (course tea); seaweeds – konbu (kemp), nori, hijiki, kanten; and traditional natural foods -umeboshi (pickled plum), genmai (unmilled rice), tofu, soba, and azuki are all low in calories and contain many superb minerals.

Kanji of the week

浦

Ura (Creek)

## Language Lesson

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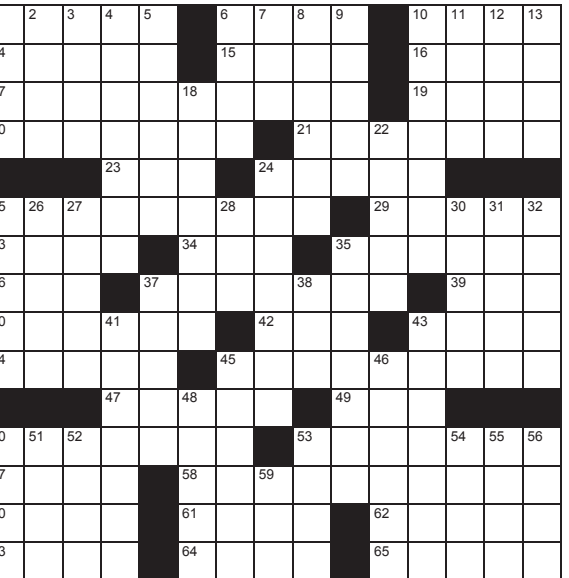
Sat. & Holiday Close at 5pm (Closed Sun.)

## The Weekly Crossword

by Margie E. Burke

### ACROSS

- Targeted, with "in on"
- Tub toy
- Gold medalist Lipinski
- Immature egg
- Heavy drinker
- Desktop feature
- Merchandise movers
- Reunion attendee
- Mournful
- Actresses Ralston and Rolle
- Guggenheim display
- Not moving
- Like Steve Austin of WCW
- Lookout point
- Sword handle
- Hole-making tool
- Mall attraction
- Well-worn
- Kristen or Patrick
- Something to check
- Loathsome
- Indignation
- Massive
- H.S. students
- Harvard or Columbia, for Obama
- Move like a top
- Cookie container
- Salad ingredient
- Street surface
- Wrapped up
- Emphasize
- Gardener's spring purchase
- Deck feature
- Skin disease
- Aardvark fare
- Spot
- Intense feeling

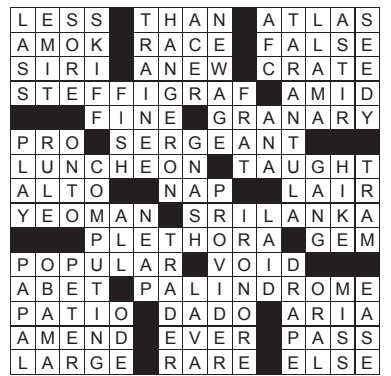


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- Eastwood played one in 2018
- Polished and posh
- Covet
- Coalition
- 1956 film, "Miss Brooks"
- Move up the ladder
- This one and this one
- Use a torque wrench
- One to grow on?
- Engine sound
- "No ifs, \_\_\_"
- Tycoons, slangily
- Blue eyes or baldness, e.g.
- Bitter feeling
- Photo session
- Any Platters platter
- "I \_\_\_ you one"
- Contradict

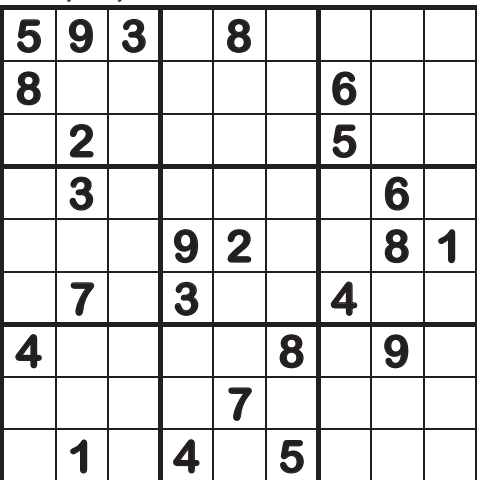
- Likeness
- Raring to go
- Brahma, in Hinduism
- Raw fish dish
- Hand holder?
- Moving ahead
- Trackman's transit
- Combat zones
- Bad atmosphere
- Condition
- Civil Rights figure Parks
- Chef's need
- Get together
- Trust, with "on"
- 007
- Hence
- Bucks and does
- Party bowlful

### Answers to Last Week's Crossword:



## SUDOKU

Difficulty: Easy



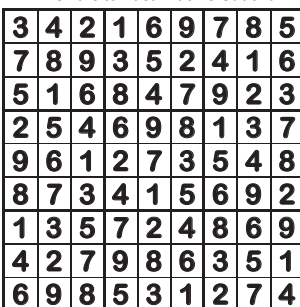
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Edited by Margie E. Burke

### HOW TO SOLVE:

Each row must contain the numbers 1 to 9; each column must contain the numbers 1 to 9; and each set of 3 by 3 boxes must contain the numbers 1 to 9.

### Answers to Last Week's Sudoku:



## FESTIVAL BOOTH - CONCERT - SPORTING EVENT INSURANCE AVAILABLE!



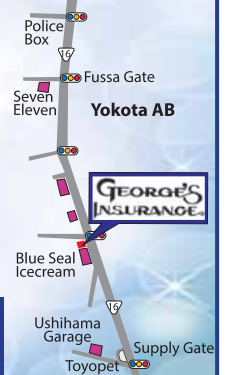
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January / February 2020

Hospitalization (3 nights):

Early February 2020

## Do you fit in the following important requirements?

- ✓ **White Female** aged 20 to 64 years old.
- ✓ **Are unable to bear children**  
i.e. post menopausal, surgically sterile or due to some other condition.
- ✓ Body mass index (BMI) less than 30
- ✓ Healthy with no history of severe allergies or serious medical conditions.

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[https://asbo.co.jp/asbo\\_eng/](https://asbo.co.jp/asbo_eng/)

There is also the possibility of other trials in the future for healthy males and females, if you are interested in participating, please do not hesitate to make contact using the above links.



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